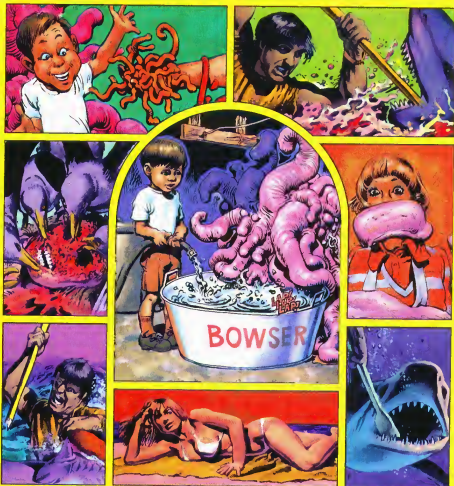


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ISSUE NO. FIVE
CONTENTS 1977

BOWSER Little Timmy didn't mind Bowser eating the rats and stray dogs but then it began to devour people. Timmy's folks knew that unless Bowser could be taught that the neighbors were a No-No it was sleep time!

THE SUCCUBUS STONE This case baffled detective Matheson. Young men were shriveling and dying of old age. The only clue Matheson could find which linked the deaths together was the glowing stone.

CORPSE WITH MISSING MIND Pendragon's old friend, the multi-millionaire Henderson Hunt, had passed away. Then at the funeral Pandy and Vampi are told of a mindless cadaver and a cadaverless grave!

THE MUMMY! . . . AND AN END Jerome Curry was trapped within the fetid, decaying body of the Mummy while some other man pranced about in his body. Curry became angry and his anger had no limitations!

DEJA VU When Janet Becker agreed to undergo hypnosis she couldn't have realized her session would take her back to a time where her ancestor was executed for a witch. Or was it her descendant and who was cursed?

DEMONS OF FATHER PAIN The demons, Belial and friends, had been set free to steal and murder. Whoever possessed the matching bracelet was responsible for the creatures. The trail pointed to the church!

THE ORIGIN OF THE SPIRIT His name was Denny Colt and his profession was police investigation. But he had to die so that THE SPIRIT could be created. A law enforcer not even the underworld could kill!

IN DEEP They were adrift upon the sea, clinging to a life preserver, clutching to life. The sea, the sharks, the gulls wanted her body but he wouldn't let them have her. He fought and in the end, won . . . in a way.

BOWSER

GETTIN' HARD
T' FIND STRAYS IN
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD
BOWSER, HOPE YA
DON'T MIND COLD
MEAT ONCE IN
A WHILE

I'LL DO WHAT
I CAN, BUT I AIN'T
PROMISIN' NOTHIN'. I GOT
LUCKY TONIGHT, BUT SOME-
TIMES I LOOK FOR HOURS
WITHOUT FINDIN' A
THING. ITS TAKIN' UP
ALL MY TIME.

BOWSER

CRASH!









WHY DO WE
HAVE TO WALK
BOWSER AT NIGHT,
DAD? ALL THE OTHER
KIDS WALK THEIR
PETS DURING THE
DAY.

YOU HAVE TO
REMEMBER, TIM, THAT
BOWSER IS A VERY SPECIAL
PET. A LOT OF PEOPLE
WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

THEY'D WANT
TO LOCK BOWSER UP,
OR EVEN KILL HIM, JUST
BECAUSE HE'S DIFFERENT.
WE HAVE TO WALK HIM
AT NIGHT SO NOBODY
SEES.

PEOPLE ARE
STUPID! BOWSER'S
MY FRIEND! HE'S
THE BEST FRIEND I
EVER HAD!

I KNOW, SON, I
KNOW. BUT LATELY
BOWSER HAS GOTTEN...
UNMANAGEABLE!

I'M AFRAID
THAT IF HE ACTS
UP AGAIN, WELL,
YOUR MOTHER AND I
WON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE
BUT TO PUT HIM AWAY.
YOU UNDERSTAND,
DON'T YOU
SON?

YEAH,
I... I
GUESS I
DO.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

DOWN BOY
DOWN! LET
HER GO!

LET
LOOSE,
BOWSER.
DOWN,
BOWSER!





LATER THAT NIGHT...



YA GOTTA
RUN, BOWSER.
THEY'RE GONNA
KILL YA! YA
GOTTA RUN AWAY
AND NEVER COME
BACK, Y'UNDER-
STAND?



NOW GO,
BOY. LEAVE!
AND DON'T
EVER COME
BACK!



G'BYE,
BOWSER.

WELL, IT'S PRETTY **OBVIOUS** WHAT'S **HAPPENED**, TIM, AND IT'S ONLY GOING TO MAKE THINGS HARDER FOR **ALL** OF US! NOW WE HAVE TO **FIND** BOWSER! AND THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** HE'S DONE DURING THE NIGHT.

YOU'VE DISAPPOINTED US **GREATLY**, TIMMY. IT WAS A VERY **FOOLISH** THING TO DO.

LUCKILY BOWSER IS EASY TO FOLLOW, AND I'LL EXPECT **YOU** TO LEAD US TO HIM, TIM.

THAT WON'T BE **NECESSARY**, DEAR. BOWSER DIDN'T GO FAR.

BOWSER!

OH, BOWSER! WHY DIDN'T YA RUN **AWAY**? NOW THEY'LL **KILL** YA!

MAYBE **NOT**, TIM. I KNOW **WHY** BOWSER'S BEEN ACTING SO STRANGE AFTER ALL.

YOU SEE, PETS ARE **OFTEN** KIND OF TOUCHY...

...JUST BEFORE THEY HAVE **PUPPIES!**

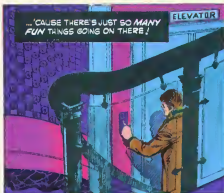
PROLOGUE



IF IT'S TRUE THAT NEW YORK CITY IS A HAPPY TOWN, U.S.A...

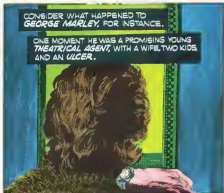


...THEN THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN HAS GOT TO BE ONE BIG PARTY...



... 'CAUSE THERE'S JUST SO MANY FUN THINGS GOING ON THERE!

ELEVATOR



CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENED TO GEORGE MARLEY, FOR INSTANCE.

ONE MOMENT HE WAS A PROMISING YOUNG THEATRICAL AGENT, WITH A WIFE, TWO KIDS, AND AN ULCER.



ELEVATOR



IT TOOK LESS THAN ONE MINUTE FOR GEORGE MARLEY TO BECOME A... WITHERED, DECAYING METHUSELAN!

AGATHA MILHAUS DISCOVERED THE BODY IN THE HALLWAY AT 12:16 a.m.

DETECTIVE CHRISTOPHER MATHESON, EIGHTH PRECINCT, WAS MOST UNHAPPY TO RECEIVE THE CALL. HE DIDN'T PARTICULARLY LIKE MURDERS AT 12:16 a.m.

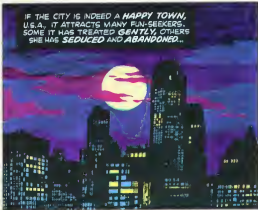
NOT THAT THEY APPEALED TO HIM AT OTHER TIMES OF DAY, BUT AFTER MIDNIGHT HE HAD TO DEAL WITH ROONEY HOFFMAN, THE ASSISTANT MEDICAL EXAMINER.

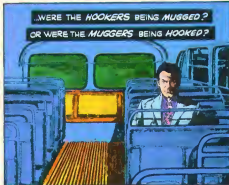
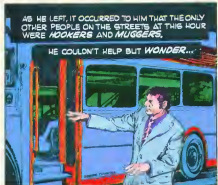
AND HOFFMAN WAS A PAIN IN A PLACE MATHESON DIDN'T LIKE TO HAVE PAINS.



THE SUCCUBUS STONE







CHARLES CORNWALL HAD BEEN A BUS DRIVER FOR FORTY YEARS. HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE JOB FOR THIRTY-NINE YEARS AND ELEVEN MONTHS. BUT WHEN IT CAME RIGHT DOWN TO IT...

...HE RATHER LIKED HIS ROLE AS A PASSIVE MARTYR.

HEY, MAC... THIS IS THE LAST STOP! YOU PLANNIN' TO GO HOME WITH ME OR WHAT?

HE WAS USED TO HAVING DRUNKS ABOARD. IN FACT, HE WAS ALMOST GRATEFUL FOR THEM, FOR THEY GAVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO STOP DRIVING FOR A MOMENT AND EXERT A LITTLE AUTHORITY.

HE WAS NOT USED TO HAVING DEAD MEN ABOARD, HOWEVER!

HEY, WAKE UP! OH MY GOD!

CHRISTOPHER MATHESON KNEW, EVEN BEFORE THE CALL CAME IN, THAT THIS WASN'T GOING TO BE A GOOD NIGHT. HE SENSED IT THE SAME WAY HIS GRANDMOTHER COULD SENSE TOMORROW'S WEATHER BY THE WAY HER ARTHRITIS BEHAVED...

FORTY YEARS I BEEN DRIVIN' THIS BUS AND NOTHIN' LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE!

I GET A LOTTA DRUNKS ON THIS ROUTE, Y'KNOW? I THOUGHT HE WAS ONE'A THEM!

CAN YOU TELL US WHERE HE BOARDED THE BUS, MR. CORNWALL?

CORNER OF GROVER AND THORNTON STREETS!

THAT'S RIGHT OUTSIDE MADAME GOWEY'S PLACE!

AND HOW WOULD YOU KNOW THAT?

WELL... I... ER--!

EXCUSE ME! I FOUND ANOTHER STONE ON YOUR LATEST CORPSE.

NEXT TO PAPER WORK, STAKEOUTS HAVE TO BE THE Dullest PART OF POLICE ROUTINE. SO WHEN CHRISTOPHER MATHESON STOOD ON THE CORNER OF GROVER AND THORNTON THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...

...HE HAD A LOT OF TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHY HE NEVER BECAME A DOCTOR LIKE HIS MOTHER ALWAYS SUGGESTED.

BUT IF MATHESON KNEW WHAT WAS OCCURRING *INSIDE THE PENTHOUSE*, HE'D HAVE HAD FAR *BETTER* THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

TONIGHT IS THE *THIRD* AND *FINAL* NIGHT OF THE *FULL MOON* FOR THIS MONTH.

ONCE AGAIN, WE MUST PERFORM THE *RITE*



ACCORDING TO LEGEND, *SUCCUBI* ARE DEMONS WHO MATE WITH MORTAL MEN...

...TO DRAIN THE LIFE AND VITALITY FROM THEIR VICTIMS...



...SO THAT THEIR *OWN* LIVES MAY BE ETERNALLY *PRESERVED*...

THE EXACT POWERS THAT ENABLED THEIR KIND TO *THRIVE* WERE *MYSTERIOUS* AND *UNKNOWN*!

EVEN *MADAME GOVAY* HAD NOT TOLD THE GIRLS. ALL THEY KNEW...



...WAS THAT CONCENTRATED *WILL POWER*, FILTERED THROUGH THE *MYSTERIOUS STONE* AT PRECISELY *MIDNIGHT*...



...MADE THEM *YOUNGER*... MORE *BEAUTIFUL* THAN THEY ALREADY WERE!

SO SLEEPY. WHAT TIME IS IT...?

FIVE MINUTES BEFORE *MIDNIGHT*.

I...I'VE GOT TO BE *GOING*! M-MY MOTHER WILL BE--!



OUTSIDE, CHRISTOPHER MATHESON WONDERED IF HE COULD STILL APPLY TO *MEDICAL SCHOOL* AT THIRTY SIX YEARS OF AGE!

E-EXCUSE ME, SIR. D-DIDN'T MEAN TO *BUMP* YOU!

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE *YOUNG* TO BE KEEPING *MADAME GOVAY* IN *FURS*?



MATHESON KNEW IT WAS A *LONG SHOT*. HE WASN'T EVEN CERTAIN THE BOY HAD GONE TO *MADAME GOVAY'S* PLACE...

THEN A CLOCK IN THE DISTANCE CHIMED *MIDNIGHT*...



GOOD GOD!

...AND MATHESON *CURSED* AS HE SAW HIS SUSPICIONS *CONFIRMED*.

HE TURNED *OLD* BEFORE MY EYES!

NOTHING MORE I CAN DO FOR HIM...

...EXCEPT FIND OUT *HOW* AND *WHY*? NOT THAT IT'LL MAKE HIM OR HIS *KIN* FEEL ANY BETTER!



MATHESON CHARGED INTO MADAME GOVAYS...!

BOGART ALWAYS DID IT. **SEAN CONNERY** ALWAYS DID IT. SO DID A MILLION TV DETECTIVES!

SO WHY SHOULDN'T **HE**?

JUST THIS **ONCE**.

POLICE!
THIS IS A
RAID!

ONE MAN
PULLING A
RAID? YOU
ARE CRAZY!

BUT
YOU AIN'T
GETTING
IN!



THE MADAME
AND HER LADIES
MUST BE IN
HERE...WAITING
FOR ME, NO
DOUBT!

MATHESON KNEW THAT WHATEVER
ANSWER HE HOPED TO FIND, LAY
IN THE BACK ROOM.

WHEN HE PUSHED OPEN THE DOOR,
HE WASN'T AT ALL SHOCKED TO
SEE A **HAREM** OF CAT-LIKE
WOMEN LEERING AT HIM **HATE-
FULLY**.





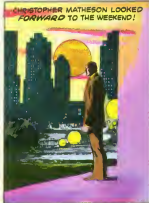
STAY WHERE YOU ARE. I WON'T HESITATE TO...

HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY. YET MATHESON KNEW THAT IF HE WERE TO SURVIVE A QUICK TRIP TO OLD AGE, HE WOULD HAVE TO DESTROY THE STONE...



MATHESON WATCHED AS ONE BY ONE, THE ILLUSIONS FELL AWAY...THE BEAUTY DIED...

...AND WHEN ALL ILLUSIONS HAVE BEEN STRIPPED, THERE IS NOTHING LEFT BUT...



THE Corpse With the Missing Mind

... ASHES TO
ASHES; DUST TO
DUST. MAY HIS SOUL
REST IN ETERNAL
PEACE.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN
A GOOD FRIEND TO YOU, PEN.
I'M ONLY SORRY I NEVER
GOT THE CHANCE TO MEET
HIM.

HE SAW ALMOST NO
ONE IN HIS FINAL
YEARS. MY CHILD
HENDERSON HUNT
WAS A TOTAL
RECLUSE.

VAMPIRELLA

AS FOR FRIENDS,
HENDERSON *HAD* NO FRIENDS
ONCE, WE WERE INSEPARABLE
BUT WHEN MONEY CAME TO MEAN
MORE TO HIM THAN PEOPLE, WE
WENT OUR SEPERATE WAYS.

AND THAT, MY DEAR,
WAS ALMOST FORTY
YEARS AGO.







WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, CHARLIE? T-THAT HENDERSON ISN'T DEAD?

PEN... I'VE TOLD NO ONE THIS... FOR FEAR THEY WOULD THINK ME INSANE!

I... I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU! YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN WHO WILL BELIEVE ME!

H-HENDERSON ISN'T IN THAT GRAVE, PEN!

HENDERSON KNEW THE END WAS NEAR. HE ORDERED ME TO READY HIS JET FOR IT'S FINAL FLIGHT. HE WANTED TO GO HOME... TO DIE IN HIS NATIVE TEXAS!



"PEN... I SWEAR... WHEN I HELPED THE BOSS ABOARD THAT PLANE, THERE WAS NO ONE BUT HIM AND ME IN THAT BIRD!"

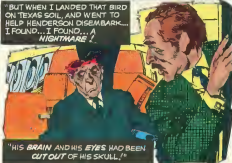
"I... I'M NOT SURE *WHERE* HE IS, T-THE LAST I SAW OF HIM WAS ONE WEEK AGO, H-HE LOOKED LIKE *DEATH* WARMED OVER..."

"HE WAS SO WEAK, RUN DOWN, *AGE* HAD CHASED HIM TO THE EDGE OF HIS GRAVE, AND WAS PUSHING HARD TO SHOVE HIM IN!"



"I FLEW THE PLANE FROM ACAPULCO TO HOUSTON WHILE H.H., I THOUGHT, SLEPT IN THE REARWARD CABIN."

"BUT WHEN I LANDED THAT BIRD ON TEXAS SOIL, AND WENT TO HELP HENDERSON DISSEMBARK... I FOUND... I FOUND... A NIGHTMARE!"



"HIS *BRAIN* AND HIS *EYES* HAD BEEN CUT OUT OF HIS SKULL!"



OH, MY GOD!

IT WAS HORRIBLE I RADIOED THE TOWER MR HUNT HAD EXPIRED IN MID-FLIGHT. I ORDERED A COFFIN DELIVERED TO THE JET.

NO ONE SAW THE BODY EXCEPT MR. HUNT'S PHYSICIAN WHO WAS AS SHOCKED AS I AT THE CONDITION OF THE BOSS' CORPSE.



HE FALSIFIED THE DEATH CERTIFICATE, CLAIMING H.H. HAD DIED OF A STROKE.

THE COFFIN WAS SEALED AND NO ONE WAS THE WISER.

B-BUT I SWEAR TO YOU, PEN... I... I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BOSS WHILE I WAS PILOTING THAT PLANE!



THUD!

W-WHO COULD HAVE STOLEN A MAN'S BRAIN... AND WHY--? HUH?

PEN! LOOK! G-GAS! CHOKE! N-NOOO BLACKING OUT! COUGH! COUGH!

SOME TIME LATER, TWO DROWSY FIGURES STYR... AND SLOWLY REGAIN STUNNED, SLEEPY SENSES.

P-PEN!
A-ARE YOU
ALRIGHT?

V-VAMPI!
W-WHERE
ARE WE?

I'M NOT SURE
THE LAST THING
I REMEMBER
IS THE CAR...
THE GAS!

CHARLIE!
WHERE'S
CHARLIE? WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO
HIM?

IF WE FIND
OUT WHERE WE
ARE... JUST MAYBE
WE'LL BE ABLE TO
FIND YOUR FRIEND!
AGHHH!

T-THOSE
LIGHTS--!

SO BRIGHT...
W-WHERE ARE
THEY COMING
FROM?

OH MY GOD
NOOO!

OK LORDY... I
SWEAR I HAVEN'T
TOUCHED A DROP ALL
MORNING! W-WHY IS
THIS HAPPENING
TO ME?

EITHER WE'RE
UPSIDE DOWN... OR
THIS ROOM IS.

HI NO!
HI NO! IT'S
OFF TO PLAY
WE GO!

LOOK,
MATEY'S, IT'S
A WOMAN!
HE! HE!

HA! HA! HA!
ME AIN'T SEEN A
LADY SINCE SNOW
LOST HER
WHITENESS!
HE! HOO!

AT 'ER.
ME BOYOS!

PEN...
WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE?

HA! HA! IT'S
MORE FUN THAN
PLAYIN' IN THE MINE
FIELDS EH ME
LADIES?

HANDS OFF
O'SULLIVAN... THAT
CHUNK O' ER IS
MINE!

PENNNN--!







HENDERSON?

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN...

OH DEAR LORD!



DON'T BE SHOCKED; THAT'S SIMPLY THE OLD, RUN DOWN, BURNED OUT BODY OF HENDERSON HUNT...

I TRADED IT IN ON THIS NEWER MODEL...

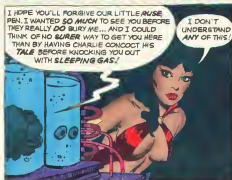
H-HAYWARD? CHARLIE?



I- IS THAT REALLY Y-YOU?

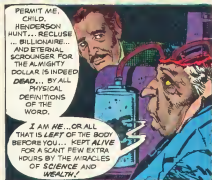
ALL THAT'S LEFT OF ME, PEN... TWO WATER-LOGGED EYES AND A SENILE OFTEN-FORGETFUL BRAIN...

...ALL HELD TOGETHER WITH COMPUTER CIRCUITRY THAT'LL KEEP ME RUNNING TILL MY DURACELLS RUN DOWN!



I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE OUR LITTLE ABUSE, PEN. I WANTED SO MUCH TO SEE YOU BEFORE THEY REALLY DO BURY ME... AND I COULD THINK OF NO SURER WAY TO GET YOU HERE THAN BY HAVING CHARLIE CONCOCT HIS TALE BEFORE KNOCKING YOU OUT WITH SLEEPING GAS!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS!



PERMIT ME, CHILD, HENDERSON HUNT... RECLUSE ... BILLIONAIRE... AND ETERNAL SCROUNGER FOR THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR IS INDEED DEAD... BY ALL PHYSICAL DEFINITIONS OF THE WORD.

I AM HE... OR ALL THAT IS LEFT OF THE BODY BEFORE YOU... KEPT ALIVE FOR A SCANT FEW EXTRA HOURS BY THE MIRACLES OF SCIENCE AND WEALTH!



MY FRIENDS... BEFORE YOU'VE A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF A MAN WHO WASTED HIS LIFE. I WAS SO BUSY MAKING MONEY AND LOSING FRIENDS THAT I WAS NOT EVEN AWARE OF MY WASTEFULNESS UNTIL THE END...

...UNTIL IT WAS ALMOST TOO LATE!



IT WAS ONLY AT THE END THAT I REALIZED I SHOULD DO SOMETHING WITH MY VAST FORTUNE, OTHER THAN ALLOW IT TO GROW MOLD IN A DARK-SMELLING VAULT! IN MY FINAL ACT OF SELFISHNESS, I HAD THIS LIFE-SUSTAINING COMPUTER CONSTRUCTED...

... AND IN MY FINAL MOMENTS OF LIFE, HIGH OVER MY HOME IN A SCORING JET PLANE, HAD THE ESSENCE OF WHAT I WAS TRANSPLANTED INTO IT!



THE MACHINE HAS ALLOWED ME FOR A SHORT TIME TO BE REBORN, BUT THIS TIME I'M GOING TO LIVE MY LIFE SO THAT OTHERS MAY BENEFIT

I'M GOING TO TRY TO ATONE FOR THE SELFISH WAYS OF MY LAST SEVENTY YEARS!

PEN, OLD FRIEND... YOU AND MY LOYAL CHARLES ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN A LIFETIME THAT I HAVE EVER CALLED MY *FRIENDS*!

THE THREE OF US STUDIED *ILLUSIONRY* TOGETHER. WE SHARED THE BEST OF TIMES. WE SHARED THE WORST OF TIMES. WE WERE PENNILESS THEN... BUT WE ALWAYS HAD OUR *COMPANIONSHIP*!



WHEN MY FATHER DIED AND LEFT ME HIS HOLDINGS, I... I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU TURNED *AWAY* FROM ME, OLD FRIEND. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THEN WHY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO HELP ME IN MY PURSUIT GREATER *WEALTH*.

I KNEW YOU WERE *DISGUSTED* BY MY SUDDEN MATERIALISM... BUT I BECAME SO *OBSESSED* WITH ACCUMULATING DIRTY GREEN *PAPER* THAT I DIDN'T CARE WHAT YOU OR THE REST OF THE WORLD THOUGHT!



I NEVER CARED, PEN... EVEN IN MY LONELY HOURS OF SOLITUDE... NEVER UNTIL THE *END*.



AND THEN, I BEGAN THINKING OF YOU, MY FRIEND. OF HOW YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE OF US WHO HAD TRULY LIVED A *FULL* LIFE

YOU PURSUED WHAT CHARLES AND I *ABANDONED*. YOU WENT ON TO ENTERTAIN PEOPLE... TO MAKE THEM *HAPPY*!

YOU DID IT WELL, PEN... AND YOU'VE MADE CHARLES AND ME *PROUD*!



THIS IS THE GATEWAY TO WONDERLAND

IT CAME TO ME, PEN SOMETHING I HAD FORGOTTEN *FORTY YEARS AGO*! I REMEMBERED HOW YOU, CHARLES AND I USED TO TALK ABOUT OPENING A *WONDERLAND*... A PLACE OF *MAGIC AND DREAMS*, WHERE PEOPLE COULD COME TO FORGET THEIR TROUBLES.



I REMEMBERED, PEN, TOO *LATE*... IN MY FINAL MOMENTS I REMEMBERED AN I VOWED I WOULD SEE THAT DREAM BECOME *REALITY*!

A-AND YOU HAVE, MR HUNT... T-THAT YOU HAVE!

AND IT'S BEAUTIFUL!



YOU WERE THE *FIRST*, PEN. YOU'VE BEEN THE FIRST PERSON TO PLAY IN MY AMUSEMENT PARADISE, A-AND I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW... *FRIEND*... THAT I'VE BUILT IT FOR YOU *MORE* THAN ANYONE ELSE!



TOMORROW, WONDERLAND WILL OPEN TO THE WORLD. IT WILL BE *FREE*... TOTALLY *FREE*... AND THERE WILL BE *OTHER* WONDERLANDS OPENING IN ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT NEED THEM MOST!

IT WILL BE THE FIRST TIME HENDERSON HUNT HAS EVER *LOST* MONEY ON A VENTURE...



...BUT Y'KNOW SOMETHING, MY FRIENDS... IT WILL BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER TRULY BEEN *HAPPY*!



PROLOGUE

AND AN END CAME
HERE. AT THE
BEGINNING POINT,
A FEW FEET DOWN
IN GRITTY HOT SAND...
IN A YOMING
SARCOPHAGUS OF
WEATHERED NORM-
WOOD...

AND YOU, JEROME
CURRY WERE YET
TRAPPED WITHIN
THE CORPSE OF
THE MUMMY! BUT
YOU CAN'T CARE
NOW. NOT NOW.
IT HAD ALL GONE
SO VERY WRONG!



AND WHAT OF THE AMULET? NOW
HAD YOU LOST IT? CARELESSNESS
NO... THIEVES! THEY STOLE IT
FROM YOU AND IT WAS QUICKLY
LOST IN A SEA OF HANDS... AND
TIME.

CAN YOU
REMEMBER
WHEN YOU
FIRST
FOUND IT?
WHEN IT
FIRST CAME
INTO YOUR
POSSESSION?
YOU COULD
NEVER KNOW
IT WOULD
DESTROY
YOU!

YET, WAS IT PURE ILL-PROVIDENCE
THAT TORTURED YOU TO DEATH? WERE
YOU BUT AN INNOCENT VICTIM OF THE
AMULET?

BY GOD! THE AMULET!
ALL THESE YEARS OF READING
ABOUT THE TREASURED AMULET
OF THE EGYPTIANS... I NEVER
DREAMED I WOULD POSSESS
IT!

AND NOW... IT IS LOST TO ME!
AND I'M IMPRISONED
BY ITS FOUL POWER!

WAS YOUR CURSE DECREED
BY FATE, JEROME? OR
WAS IT YOUR OWN GREED...
YOUR OWN SICKNESS FOR
POWER THAT HAD CAUSED
YOUR UNDOING?

THE MUMMY?

YES...YOUR DOWNFALL. YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HOW IT ENDED, WILL YOU, JEROME...? YOU'LL FOREVER REMEMBER THE PAIN...THE FLAMES EATING AWAY AT THE WITHERED HULK YOU OCCUPIED! YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HOW HELPLESS YOU FELT?

THEY GATHERED AROUND YOU... LIKE A PACK OF BLOODLUSTING JACKALS BRINSING DOWN A WOUNDED CALF! THEY THREW TORCHES! THEY BURNED YOU... TO DEATH!

YOU COULDN'T MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND ALL YOU WANTED WAS TO BE LEFT ALONE IN YOUR MISERY. YOU'D ALREADY SEALED YOUR OWN DOOM. YOU WERE THE WALKING DEAD SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO ROT IN PEACE.

BUT THEY DIDN'T GIVE YOU ANY PEACE, DID THEY? IT WAS AS IF THEY KNEW THE EVIL OF YOUR GING...THE MANY YOU MURDERED FOR THE THRILL AS YOU HID IN THE WRAPPINGS OF A MAN THREE THOUSAND YEARS UNDEAD.



...AND
AN END!

THE AMULET! THAT WAS YOUR DOWNFALL. THE DAMNED AMULET! NO, THOSE DAMNED THIEVES...! OR, NO...PERHAPS IT WAS ALL OF YOUR OWN CREATION! AND THE FIRE BURNED YOUR GUILT INTO YOUR SOUL FOR ETERNITY.

YOU KILLED YOURSELF, FOOL! YOU KILLED YOURSELF!

YOUR INSTINCTS, OR PERHAPS THE INSTINCTS OF THE DISGUSTING BODY YOU OCCUPIED LED YOU BACK TO THE TOMB. YOU DIDN'T KNOW FOR SURE... BUT YOU SENSED THE AMULET HAD FOUND ITS WAY BACK THERE.

YET, SOMEONE WAS THERE BEFORE YOU.

HE HAD ALREADY FOUND THE AMULET. AND SOMETHING MORE...

THAT STRANGE NECKLACE I DISCOVERED YESTERDAY... I LOOKED IT UP, IF MY GUESS IS RIGHT, IT WILL GIVE THE POSSESSOR THE POWER TO TRANSFER HIS SOUL INTO THE BODY OF A DEAD MAN!

HERE SUPERSTITIOUS SPECULATION. STILL... IF I COULD TRANSFER INTO SOMEONE ELSE... WHO WOULD IT BE? ONE OF THESE BANDAGED STIFFS? HMM?

CHARLES BENNING WAS AN ARCHEOLOGIST REEXAMINING A TOMB SITE WHICH WAS CLOSED DOWN FIVE YEARS BEFORE DUE TO MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. HE WAS ENJOYING IT. HIS WIFE WAS DEPLORED IT EQUALLY.

GOD, YOU GRAVEDIGGING BORE! WHAT EXCITEMENT IS THERE IN WATCHING US DUST OFF SKULLS AND COFFINS!

NO REAL MAN WOULD NEVER IGNORE SOMEONE LIKE ME FOR A MUSHY PLACE SUCH AS THIS!

BUT, JANICE... YOU KNOW WHAT THIS TOMB COULD MEAN FOR US!

BORED OF THE HEAT
BORED OF SAND IN MY
NOSTRILS... SAND IN
MY HAIR...

I I GUESS YOU'D BE HAPPY IF I WAS A DASHINGLY ROMANTIC GIGOLO!

BUT THESE COLD ARTIFACTS BUY THOSE ENDLESS LUXURIES YOU CRAVE!

REJECTED AND DISGUSTED BY AN INATTENTIVE HUSBAND AND A MARRIAGE GONE FLAT, JANICE BOILED OVER WITH PENT UP SAVAGERY!

HEY! YOU LITTLE MAGGOT! WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN MY TENT? YOU MISERABLE THIEF!

MY HUSBAND'S RELICS! I TOLD CHARLES I WAS GOING TO KILL THE NEXT THIEVING NATIVE! I CAUGHT PLUNDERING OUR POSSESSIONS!

JANICE! STOP! DON'T HURT HER!



DON'T YOU HARM THAT CHILD!
I PROMISED THESE TRIBESMEN
NO ONE ELSE WOULD BE
PUNCHED AROUND BY
YOU!

SHE... SHE WAS
STEALING ONE OF
THOSE NECKLACES
YOU DUG UP! MAYBE
I SHOULD HAVE
GIVEN IT TO HER!



MAYBE THEN
YOU'D START
DIGGINS AROUND
FOR SOMETHING
IN MY BED
INSTEAD OF IN
A STINKING
TOMB!

IN TIME, THE WOMAN'S NEEDS OVERCAME ALL
WORDS AND PROMISES. CHARLES GLIMPSED
MORE THAN ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
EXPEDITION PROBING HER CHAIRS RATHER
THAN SARCOPHAGUSES. YET HE WAS POWER-
LESS.



GOD! WHY DID
I TEAM UP WITH
A LIMP ROPE
LIKE YOU? I
NEED A REAL
MAN! NOT A
DUNG BEETLE!



THEN HE REMEMBERED THE
AMULET... THE ONE THE
CHILD HAD TRIED TO STEAL...



YES, THE BODY! I FOUND
THAT STRANGE BODY IN
THE OUTER CRYPT RIGHT
AFTER I DISCOVERED
THE AMULET. HE HADN'T
BEEN DEAD LONG... HIS
TISSUES WERE FRESH!
HE WAS HANDSOME,
VIRILE, POTENT!

I WRAPPED HIM UP AND HID
HIM AWAY. NOW... I KNOW
WHAT I'VE GOT TO DO!



THAT BODY, THE ONE CHARLES
FOUND, THE BODY OF JEROME
CURRY... LEFT IN A SAFE
PLACE... A PLACE DISCOVERED
BY THE ARCHEOLOGIST!

AT LAST, THE AMULET AND THE
BODY WERE TOGETHER AGAIN...
BUT WHERE WERE YOU, JEROME
CURRY? YET TRAPPED IN A
MEANDERING HUSK... STILL SEARCH-
ING FOR THEM BOTH!



WASN'T PROF. MIDERMAN SURPRISED WHEN A HANDSOME YOUNG "STRANGER" FOUND HIS WAY INTO CAMP JUST AFTER THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CHARLES BENNING? BUT, OF COURSE, YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT WAS HAPPENING, DID YOU, JEROME? YOUR HANDSOME BODY WAS NOW HARBORING THE MIND AND SOUL OF A PLAIN LITTLE MAN... WHO WANTED SIMPLY TO LIVE ANEW.

WHAT'S THAT, YOUNG MAN? WHY YES, MATTER OF FACT WE COULD USE SOME HELP! OUR HEAD ARCHEOLOGIST TURNED UP MISSING JUST YESTERDAY.

AND YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS TOMB SITE? HOW... FORTUNATE.



THEY NEVER EVEN MISSED POOR CHARLES BENNING. HOW COULD THEY WHEN THEY HAD HIS KNOWLEDGE INSIDE YOUR OWN STRIKINGLY HANDSOME YOUNG BODY? BUT WHERE WERE YOU, JEROME?

WE'D CONSIDER OURSELVES FORTUNATE TO HAVE YOU JOIN OUR EXPEDITION. YOUR TIMING IS EXTREMELY GOOD. WELCOME ABOARD! WE BEGIN DIGGING IN THE MORNING.



NO, YOU COULDN'T KNOW ALL THAT, COULD YOU, JEROME? YOU WERE BUSY FOLLOWING YOUR INSTINCTS... TIRELESSLY TREKKING ACROSS A BAREN WASTELAND, LOOKING FOR YOUR AMULET... AND YOUR BODY. REMEMBER?



WITH THE EYES OF JEROME CURRY, CHARLES BENNING WATCHED HIS WIFE... OR WAS THAT EX-WIFE... CASTING HIM AN APPROVING EYE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, HER GAZE STIRRED LONG DEAD COALS...

WE'LL MAKE THE ENTRY POINT THE EAST WALL HERE, GENTLEMEN. AND YOU, SIR, SINCE YOU ARE OUR NEWEST MEMBER, YOU HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF STRIKING THE FIRST POST.

YES, I THINK WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET ALONG FAMOUSLY. PITY CHARLES LEFT US! BUT I THINK WE'VE GAINED A MORE DYNAMIC PERSONAGE TO TAKE HIS PLACE!

WHY, THANK YOU, SIR.

HAHA, THIS NEW MAN... BET HE CAN REPLACE POOR, BLAND CHARLES IN MORE WAY THAN ONE!

WITH JANICE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT, I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL RANDY AS HELL!



THAT'S WHEN YOU FINALLY ARRIVED, ISN'T IT, JEROME? FOLLOWING SOME ANCIENT SENSE STILL LEFT IN THE DE-CAYED MUMMY YOU'VE OCCUPIED FOR SO LONG. THAT'S WHEN YOU CAME INTO THE VERY ROOM WHERE YOU HID YOUR **BODY...** THE ROOM WHERE THE **AMULET** HAD RETURNED TO WAIT FOR YOU. BUT YOU WERE SO SLOW.



YOU LOOKED FIRST FOR YOUR BODY.



WHA--?? IT'S GONE! B-BUT A DIFFERENT BODY HAS BEEN LEFT IN ITS PLACE?

SOMEONE'S TAKEN MY BODY IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS ONE!

THE AMULET! WHOEVER FOUND YOUR BODY ALSO FOUND THE AMULET! AND FOR SOME STRANGE REASON USED IT TO TAKE YOUR BODY, LEAVING THIS CLUMSY FORM AS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR YOUR OWN!



FIND THE AMULET! GET IT BACK! FIND YOUR BODY! GET BACK INTO IT AND RUN! RUN FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THIS NIGHTMARE YOU'VE LIVED FOR SO LONG, JEROME!

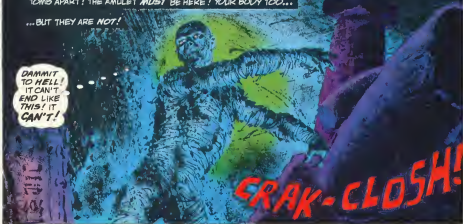


WHERE IS THE AMULET? WHERE IS MY BODY? GOD!

FEAR RUNS LIKE AN ICY RIVER THROUGH YOUR TRAPPED SOUL! BLEEDING, FESTERING FEAR, CRAWLING THROUGH YOUR BRAIN LIKE BURNING WORMS, SEND YOU MAD WITH RAGE! YOU RIP THE TOWNS APART! THE AMULET **MUST** BE HERE! YOUR BODY TOO...

...BUT THEY ARE NOT!

DAMNIT TO HELL! IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS! IT CAN'T!





FINALLY...YOU DID FIND
SOMETHING, DIDN'T
YOU, JEROME & THE
THIEF! THIS BODY
STEALING GHOUL!
AND YOU KNEW...HE
MUST PAY!



BUT FOOL!
NOT WITH HIS
LIFE!

SHOFER!




YET...YOU'RE TOO FAR
GONE WITH **HATRED**
AND **FEAR** TO COM-
PREHEND WHAT YOU'VE
DONE!



YOU CAN NOW ONLY
THINK OF THE AMULET...
AND THE GIRL!



MAKE
HER TELL
WHERE
THE
AMULET
IS!
MAKE
HER!



BUT SHE DOES **NOT** TELL, AND YOU
REALIZE SHE WILL NEVER SPEAK
AGAIN, AND IT'S ONLY THEN, YOU
REALIZE...YOU ALSO KILLED ANOTHER
THIS NIGHT, JEROME...**YOURSELF!**
YOU REALIZE YOU'VE JUST COM-
MITTED **SUICIDE!**

OH MY GOD!
WHAT HAVE
I DONE?

BUT THEN YOU REMEMBERED...THE
MAN WHO STOLE YOUR BODY, LEFT
HIS IN THE TOMB.

IF YOU CAN JUST FIND THE AMU-
LET, YOU CAN TRANSFER INTO HIS
BODY. AT LEAST IT'S A CHANCE TO
LIVE!



BUT...IT'S TOO LATE, JEROME! FOR
YOU...THE FINAL PAGES OF LIFE
HAVE FINALLY BEEN WRITTEN!

THE CROWD! THEY SAW YOU!
YOU TERRIFIED THEM! THEY
HURLED TORCHES AT YOU
AND THE FLAMES INSTANTLY
ENGULFED THE PARCHED
MUSK YOU OCCUPY.



THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND,
DID THEY JEROME?

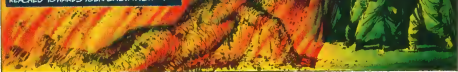
THEY COULDN'T UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU NEVER MEANT THEM
HARM...FOR YOU COULD NOT TELL
THEM! YOU COULD NOT SET
ANCIENT, ROTTING VOCAL
CHORDS TO FUNCTION...!

THE PAIN. REMEMBER THAT HORRIBLE
SEARING AGONY? THE FLAMES! THE
FIRE! BUT LOOK THERE! AROUND
THAT LITTLE GIRL'S NECK!



THE
AMULET!

REMEMBER, JEROME? YOUR LEGS CEASED
WORKING! THE MUMMIFIED REMAINS DWINDLED
IN THE FLAMES! AND YET YOU STRUGGLED...
YOU CRAWLED...GREEDY, STUPID, MURDEROUS
FOOL...IN ONE DESPERATE LUNGE, YOU
REACHED TOWARDS YOUR SALVATION...!



THEN YOU REALIZED...YOU KNEW
YOU WERE...DEAD. IT WAS
OVER. YOU DIED JUST A FEW
FEET FROM REDEMPTION!
A FEW FEET!



AND AN END CAME HERE.
BACK AT THE BEGINNING POINT.
A FEW FEET DOWN IN GRITTY,
HOT SAND...IN A TOMBING
SARCOPHAGUS OF WEATHERED
WORMWOOD.



AND THE LAST THING YOU HEAR IS YOUR OWN VOICE,
SCREAMING INTO YOUR OWN SOUL... "YOU KILLED
YOURSELF, FOOL! YOU KILLED YOURSELF!"

THE MUMMY'S
FINAL VICTIM...
WAS YOU!

THE SONOROUS DRONE OF HIS VOICE RELAXES YOU, JANET BECKER...
LULLS YOU INTO AN IRRESISTIBLE **TRANCE**.

WAVES OF UTTER TRANQUILITY WASH WARMLY
OVER YOU, AND YOUR FINAL THOUGHT IS A
QUESTION. YOU WONDER **WHY** YOU VOLUNTEERED
TO BE A SUBJECT OF **PRE-NAVAL HYPNOSIS**!



YOU ARE **SAFE**, JANET.
THERE IS NO DANGER IN
REMEMBERING.

YES, JANET...
REMEMBER... BACK TO
A TIME **BEFORE** YOUR MOTHER
BORE YOU. REMEMBER BACK
TO YOUR **PREVIOUS LIFE**...
TIME... AND A DIFFERENT
INCARNATION!

"I... I WAS SOMEONE **ELSE** THEN...! **LIKE** MYSELF...
BUT IN A DIFFERENT TIME AND... ANOTHER PLACE!
MY NAME WASN'T JANET BECKER... I WAS PRIS-
CILLA STARKER...! A-AND I LIVED ALONE... IN
SALEM... EXCEPT FOR POOR KITTY. SHE WAS MY
ONLY COMPANY! HER WITH ONE EYE... AND ME
WITH MY PARENTS LONG IN THEIR **GRAVES**!"



A-AND THEN...! THAT **FINAL** EVENING! THEY
CAME... WHILE I WAS PREPARING BROTH FOR MY
DINNER! T-THE THREE PILGRIMS **BURST** INTO MY
HOME... A-AND I WAS **TERRIFIED**!"



YOU'RE A **WITCH**,
PRISCILLA STARKER!

WE'VE SEEN YOU
CONSORTING WITH A ONE-
EYED CAT... TENDING TO A
VILE **WITCHES** BREW!

Y-THE MEN **GRABBED** ME THEN... **DROGGED** ME
FROM MY HOME... A-AND SET **TORCH** TO MY
CABIN WHILE POOR KITTY WAS YET LOCKED
WITHIN!"



A-AND EVEN AS THE PYRE RAGED
THEY **DROGGED** ME TO THE VILLAGE
... T-TO A STAKE RESERVED FOR
THE **BURNING OF WITCHES**...
A-AND THERE I WAS ACCUSED
OF UNSPEAKABLE CRIMES
AGAINST **GOD**!"

AYE! SHE
HAS NO PARENTS
FOR SHE'S THE
SPAWN OF
SATAN!
CONDEMN HER,
I SAY... TO A
DEATH BY
FLAMES!



N-NO...!
A-MY PARENTS ARE
DEAD! I AM **NOT**
THE DAUGHTER
OF THE DEVIL!

SILENCE,
WITCH! WE SHALL
BE THE **SOLE**
JUDGE OF
THAT!

DEJA VU



INCREDIBLE! HER STORY SUBSTANTIATES THE EXISTENCE OF REINCARNATION! HER PREVIOUS INCARNATION WAS THAT OF AN ACCUSED WITCH IN 17TH CENTURY SALEM!

YES, JANET/ IT WAS HORRIBLE BUT YOU'RE SAFE *NOW*! THINK OF IT ONLY AS A DREAM... AND TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR LIFE AS PRISCILLA STARKER.



"I REMEMBER THE HATRED IN THEIR EYES AS THEY PRESSED THEIR ACCUSATIONS..."

JUDGE MATTHEW BECKER...? CAN IT BE? MUST EXAMINE HER DOSSIER AND MAKE SURE!

REST NOW, JANET... DO NOT REMEMBER, AGAIN UNTIL I COMMAND IT! THAT'S RIGHT... REST!



SHE SPEAKS WITH A *ONE-EYED CAT*. YOUR HONOR... CONVERSES WITH IT! AND HER CAULDRON IS BUSY EVERY NIGHT WITH VILE WITCH'S BREWS AND UNHOLY POTIONS!

I PREPARE NO *POTIONS*! JUST *BROTN*... FOR MY SUPPER!

MUST YE BE WARNED *AGAIN* WITCH? I, JUDGE MATTHEW BECKER, SHALL DECIDE WHAT YE WERE BREWING IN YOUR FOUL CAULDRON!



THIS IS UNCANNY! HER GENELOGICAL RECORDS INDICATE THAT SHE *DID HAVE* AN ANCESTOR, IN SALEM IN THE 17TH CENTURY! A JUDGE MATTHEW BECKER... INFAMOUS FOR HIS WITCH TRIALS!

JANET IS HIS PRESENT-DAY DESCENDANT, YET... *INCREDIBLE*... SHE HERSELF WAS ONE OF HIS *VICTIMS* IN HER PREVIOUS INCARNATION!



"THEY WERE **DETERMINED** TO CONDEMN ME! IT WASN'T A FAIR TRIAL... I WAS THE FOCUS OF THEIR IRRATIONAL SUPERSTITIONS..."



YES / IF AS A **WITCH** I BE JUDGED AND CONDEMNED, THEN AS A **WITCH** SO SHALL I **DIE**! I **CURSE** YOU JUDGE MATTHEW BECKER! I CURSE YOU AND ALL YOUR DESCENDANTS THROUGHOUT **ETERNITY**!



YOU THOUGHT NOTHING OF DESTROYING MY CAT / SHE PROVIDED ME WITH THE ONLY COMPANIONSHIP I HAD; BUT YOU KILLED HER... AND SO I CURSE YOU! AND WHAT BETTER VEHICLE FOR YOUR DEATH THAN A WITCH'S FAMILIAR... A **CAT**? LIKE AN AVENGING ANGEL... A CAT WILL CAUSE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS A **SENSELESS**, MEANINGLESS **DEATH**!



THE AWFUL MEMORIES OF YOUR LIFE AND DEATH AS PRISCILLA STARKER FADE AWAY AS THE GENTLE MONOTONE OF THE DOCTOR'S VOICE CARRIES YOU FORWARD... THROUGH BLURRED DARKNESS... MOVING SO QUICKLY THROUGH TIME...!



GOOD LORD, BY CURSING BECKER AND HIS DESCENDANTS IN HER PREVIOUS INCARNATION, SHE'S CURSED **HERSELF**... SINCE **SHE** IS A DESCENDANT OF JUDGE BECKER IN HER **PRESENT** INCARNATION!



ALL RIGHT JANET BECKER... YOU **ARE** JANET BECKER NOW! PRISCILLA STARKER IS ONLY A THING OF THE PAST. SOON SHE WILL FADE AWAY... YOU WILL NO LONGER REMEMBER HER.



YOU WILL AWAKEN WHEN I SNAP MY FINGERS... BUT YOU WILL REMEMBER **NOTHING** OF YOUR TRANCE!

Snap



WHAT IS IT? WHAT HAPPENED? I WAS IN A TRANCE. IT WAS... **HORRIBLE... BEYOND BELIEF!** LIKE A NIGHTMARE... BUT I CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER!



THERE **IS NOTHING** TO REMEMBER, JANET. AFTER YOUR NEXT SESSION YOU WILL FEEL NO VAGUE OR FRIGHTFUL RECOLLECTIONS YOU'RE COMING ALONG WELL, DEAR...

NEXT SESSION? IF YOU THINK FOR ONE SECOND THAT I'LL SUBMIT TO ANOTHER SHATTERING EXPERIENCE LIKE **THIS** ONE...



BUT YOU **MUST** COOPERATE! YOUR EFFORTS HAVE TAKEN ME TO THE VERY BRINK OF UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF **REINCARNATION!** I CAN'T STOP NOW!

REINCARNATION?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? NEVER MIND... I DON'T EVEN WANT TO KNOW! MY DECISION IS **FINAL**. I'LL NOT LET MY MIND BE FOULED BY ANY MORE OF YOUR HYPNOTIC HOCUS-FOCUS!



NO! WAIT!
YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND!

THE
LITTLE FOOL!
TRYING TO RUIN MY
PLANS NOW! I'VE
GOT TO STOP
HER!

STRANGE HOW AFRAID
I FEEL... WHAT COULD THE HYPNOTIST
HAVE DONE TO MAKE ME SO
TENSE? I'D BETTER GET
HOME...



WHAT A
STRANGE EXPERIENCE!
I FEEL THE THREAT OF
DISASTER... AS IF IT'S
LURKING JUST AROUND
THE CORNER OR
SOMETHING...



SHE CAN'T DO
THIS TO ME! NOT WHEN
I'M SO CLOSE... TO
THE ANSWER!



THERE SHE
IS! I SHOULD BE ABLE
TO CATCH UP TO HER WITHIN
A FEW BLOCKS... CONVINCE
HER TO CONTINUE IN MY
EXPERIMENTS! WE'RE JUST
AT THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG...
MUST SEE WHAT LIES BELOW...
IF MY CONJECTURES
ARE CORRECT!



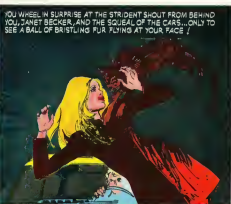
A NAMELESS, SPECTRAL
DREAD GRIPS YOU, DOESN'T
IT SEEM? BELIEVE? A DREAD
UNEARSED BY THE HYPNOSIS.



YES, HOME!
A GOOD
NIGHT'S
SLEEPAND
I'LL
FORGET I
EVER HEARD
OF PRE-NATAL
HYPNOSIS!

ELSEWHERE...A SMALL CHILD FROLICS IN THE BACK SEAT OF HER FATHER'S CAR...A PERSIAN CAT IN HER LAP...THE WIND BLOWING IN HER FACE...





EPILOGUE: YOU ARE DEAD, JANET BECKER, AND YOU WILL NEVER APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS OF A MELANCHOLY HYPNOTIST... A HYPNOTIST WHO SHUFFLES AWAY FROM YOU WITH TRAGEDY-LADEN FEET...?

I THOUGHT I COULD FIND THE ANSWER THROUGH HER... CLEAR MY PAST... FIND MY **REAL** NAME.



WHEN I'D HEARD ABOUT JANET BECKER'S DREAMS, THE WAY SHE RAVED IN HER SLEEP, I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY CLUE TO MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S IDENTITY. AND SHE **MIGHT** HAVE BEEN.

BUT INSTEAD... I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL... A GIRL WHO SHOULD HAVE HAD A LONG, PROSPEROUS LIFE AHEAD OF HER.



AND THE MYSTERY OF MY PAST WILL REMAIN UNSOLVED... THE ONLY KEY TO IT LYING DEAD ON A COLD PAVEMENT, THE VICTIM OF A CURSE I MAY BE **RESPONSIBLE** FOR...!



BUT IT'S TOO LATE NOW... ALL I'M LEFT WITH IS THE TORMENTING KNOWLEDGE THAT PERHAPS IT WAS **ME**, AND NOT A **CAT**, WHO KILLED MY GRANDMOTHER TWICE REMOVED TONIGHT.



...AND THAT MY ANCESTOR MIGHT HAVE BEEN SATAN?

— JOHN STARKER —
HYPNOTIST
ROOM



END

SAN FRANCISCO, SUMMER, 1944.

N-NOOOOO!
PLEASE ...
PLEASEEE--!

CANDIES

F
U
N
-
C
T
I
O
N

THE DEMONS OF

Father
Paul



*Mission Dolores
Orphanage*



AH! **ANOTHER**
EXCELLENT NIGHT
FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.



AGAIN, I
THANK YOU,
MY SERVANTS.

YOU MAY RETURN
NOW... TO THE PLACE FROM
WHENCE YOU CAME!



I WILL SEE YOU
AGAIN COME **TOMORROW**
EVE



THE NEXT DAY, IN A MODEST WHARF FRONT HOTEL ROOM.



IT'S THESE HEADLINES THAT BOTHER ME.

CHRONICLE

FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1948

MIDNIGHT MAULER KILLS THREE

Three people have died each night... for the last three nights.

THREE PEOPLE HAVE DIED EACH NIGHT... FOR THE LAST THREE NIGHTS.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, DAD.

THOSE HORRIBLE MUTILATIONS CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING...

...SOMEONE HAS YOUR BRACELET AND IS SUMMONING THE THREE DEMONS IT COMMANDS.

THEY'RE SETTING THE DEMONS LOOSE NIGHTLY... TO ROB... TO KILL...

I... I SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED IT... BURIED IT... SO IT WOULDN'T CAUSE MORE SUFFERING... MORE DEATHS!

DON'T SHOULDER THE GUILT FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S ACTIONS, FATHER.

YOU'VE ALREADY ENDURED MORE SUFFERING IN YOUR LIFETIME THAN ANYONE CAN ASK.

I... I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS, BOY...

I'M THE ONE WHO LET THAT BRACELET LIE THERE ...IN THE STREET WHERE ANYONE COULD HAVE PICKED IT UP!*

*SEE LAST ISSUE: "THE KING OF NOB HILL!"

I... I CREATED THAT BRACELET, SON THAT AND THE ONE YOU STILL WEAR.

I'VE UNLEASHED IT'S DEMONIC HORRORS UPON THE WORLD...

...AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DESTROYING IT RESTS WITH ME!

IN THAT CASE, WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A JOB, FATHER! TONIGHT, WE, ALONG WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT, WILL BE STAKING THE STREETS IN SEARCH OF THREE KILLER DEMONS!

BUT WHERE DO WE START LOOKING? THIS IS A BIG CITY!

RIGHT HERE, SON... WHERE ALL NINE SLAYINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE... IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THIS OLD SPANISH MISSION.

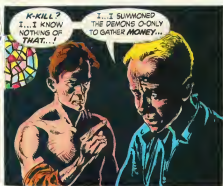
ALL WE NEED IS TO NEED IS TO FIND ONE, BOY... AND EVENTUALLY HE'LL LEAD US TO THE MONSTER WEARING THE ARMBAND.

THAT NIGHT.











WHO IS
THE MASKED
MAN
KNOWN ONLY
TO
SOCIETY
AS
THE SPIRIT?
WHO
IS THE
MAN WHO
HAS THWARTED
CRIME
AND CRIMINALS
ALL
THESE YEARS
?
WHO IS HE
AND
HOW DID
HE
COME TO
BE?
THIS IS THE
STORY.

IT WAS LONG PAST
MIDNIGHT ON A HOT,
WET JUNE NIGHT
MANY YEARS AGO...
CENTRAL CITY LAY
CHOKING FOR BREATH
IN AN EERIE FOG...

A LONE FIGURE SPURTED
THROUGH THE NARROW,
SOGGY WATERFRONT
STREETS THAT WOUND
LIKE GREY VEINS THROUGH
THE FRIGHTENED CITY.

IT WAS DENNY COLT
NOTED CRIMINOLOGIST.
HIS MISSION:

TO SAVE THE
CITY FROM THE
MAD SCIENTIST,
DR. COBRA!



DR. COBRA
THREATENS
CENTRAL CITY
WITH DESTRUCTION

DR. COBRA
THREATENS
CENTRAL CITY
WITH DESTRUCTION

ON CENTRAL CITY'S OLD WATERFRONT... SOMEWHERE IN AN ABANDONED VAULT DEEP BELOW THE CITY STREETS.



I AM ON THE BRINK OF VICTORY!

IN ONE HOUR... THE LIQUID I HAVE WORKED SO LONG TO PERFECT WILL FLOW INTO THE CITY RESERVOIRS... HAH HA HA! BY DAWN THE ENTIRE POPULATION WILL BE IN A STATE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION!



EVERYONE WILL APPEAR DEAD!! THEN... DURING THE NEXT 24 HOURS I WILL JOIN WITH THE WORLD'S GREATEST CRIMINAL... THE OCTOPUS, TO TAKE OVER CONTROL OF THE CITY... WHEN THE POPULATION AWAKENS I... WHAT IS IT GRANCH?

I HEAR... ?!



NO TIME TO ARGUE POLAN. I'VE LOCATED DR. COBRA'S HIDEOUT... CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU... I'M GOING IN...

*** IT'S THAT AMATEUR SLUTH DENNY COLT



DADDY DON'T LET HIM GO IN ALONE...

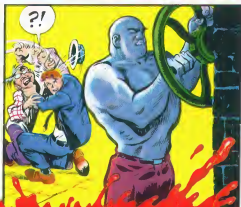
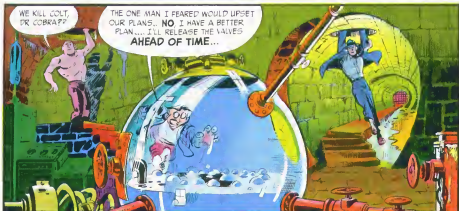
NO! NO! NO! YOU'RE NOT A COP THIS IS POLICE WORK. I'LL BE OUT WITH A SQUAD IN 20 MINUTES!



... SORRY COMMISSIONER, IN THAT TIME HE MAY RELEASE THE LIQUID... CLICK

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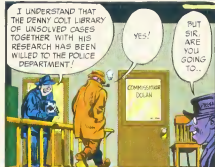


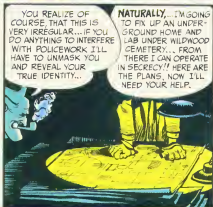
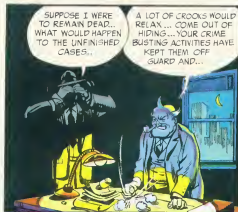






POLICE HEADQUARTERS TWO DAYS LATER...

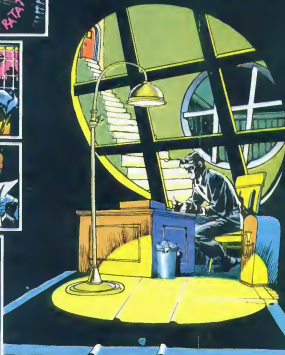






THE SPIRIT

by
JOHN EISNER



I SAW SUCH A FLOW
KILL A MAN IN
KANSAS CITY ONCE.
THE SPIRIT IS
COMING BACK FOR
MORE.

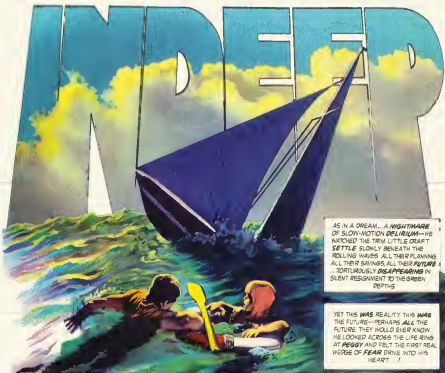


"GOD... IT'S MY FAULT
ALL MY FAULT. I
TALKED HIM INTO
THIS. THIS."



See THE SPIRIT narrowly escape poison, arson, bullets and the world's most beautiful women. Eight of his most dangerous adventures. Get THE SPIRIT No. 11. On sale October 14th!





AS IN A DREAM...A NIGHTMARE
OF SLOW-MOTION DELIRIUM--HE
WATCHED THE TRIM LITTLE CRAFT
SETTLE SLOWLY BENEATH THE
ROLLING WAVES, ALL THEIR PLANNING
ALL THEIR SAVINGS, ALL THEIR FUTURE
...TORTUROUSLY DISAPPEARING IN
SILENT RESIGNMENT TO THE GREEN
DEPTH.

YET THIS WAS REALITY THIS WAS
THE FUTURE--PERHAPS ALL THE
FUTURE THEY WOULD EVER KNOW.
HE LOOKED ACROSS THE LIFE RIMS
AT PEGGY AND FELT THE FIRST REAL
HERSE OF FEAR DRIVE INTO HIS
HEART.

UNTIL NOW, THERE HADN'T BEEN TIME
FOR FEAR...ONLY A SORT OF HEART-
RACING URGENCY TO MAKE THE RIGHT
DECISIONS, GATHER THE RIGHT ING-
REDIENTS BEFORE THE BOAT WAS GONE.
IN THE END, THERE WAS HARDLY TIME
EVEN FOR THAT....!

HANGING HERE NOW IN THE WARM
ROCKING WATER, THERE WAS, AT LAST,
THE CHANCE TO PUT THEIR SITUATION IN
PERSPECTIVE...AND THE PERSPECTIVE
LINES WERE CLEAR CUT: ENDLESS
GREEN SEA BELOW ENDLESS BLUE SKY
ABOVE, THE DREADFUL, MONOTONOUS
CERTAINTY OF IT SETTLED OVER
HIM.

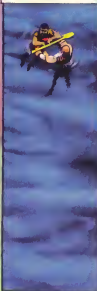


"THEY'LL FIND US," HE SAID... NOT BELIEVING IT... NOT LETTING THE DISBELIEF SHOW IN HIS VOICE. AND THE SMALL, CALM CONVICTION OF HER REPLY ALMOST BROUGHT TEARS TO HIS EYES IN THE WASTENESS OF THEIR FUTILITY. "OF COURSE THEY WILL..."

HE CAST ABOUT FUTILELY FOR SOME KIND OF SHELTER. THERE WAS NONE. THERE HADN'T BEEN TIME TO GRAB EVEN A BLANKET OR TARP. THE BOAT HAD GONE DOWN LIKE A ROCK. HE CAUGHT HER LOOKING AT HIM... "MY SKIRT," SHE SAID.



HE LOOKED AT HIS WATCH: 10:06. THE SUN WOULD BE FULL STRENGTH IN A COUPLE OF HOURS. THAT WOULD BE THEIR FIRST PROBLEM IF PRUDENT. THE BOTTLE OF GINGER ALE HE'D MANAGED TO GRAB SHOULD LAST THEM TWO OR THREE DAYS. BUT THE SUN.



HE SMILED AT HER AND REALIZED SUDDENLY HOW MUCH WORSE THINGS COULD BE FOR THEM WITHOUT EITHER OF THE OTHER THERE FOR COMPANY. HE MOVED AROUND THE RIMS AND UNZIPPED THE SKIRT FROM HER WAIST. I LOVE YOU, HE THOUGHT.



LOOPING ONE ARM ABOUT THE RIMS, HE TOOK THE BINGHAM MATERIAL IN HALF AND DRAPED PART OF IT OVER HER HEAD AND SHOULDERS—THE OTHER HALF OVER HIS OWN. IT WAS WET AND HEAVY OUT OF THE WATER, BUT WOULD PROTECT THEM FROM THE SUN'S RAYS. HE WONDERED IMMEDIATELY HOW COLD IT WOULD GET AT NIGHT.



PEGGY COULDN'T SWIM. THE FACT WAS UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND THE MOMENT THEY'D ABANDONED SHIP. HIS VERY FIRST TASK HAD BEEN TO LASH HER ARMS AND WAIST TO THE RIMS, ANTICIPATING THE EVENTUAL NEED FOR SLEEP. MOVING ABOUT NOW ON THE SLIPPERY RIMS, HE WAS GLAD HE'D THOUGHT TO BRING THE CORD.



HE KNEW **THIRST** WOULD COME **QUICKLY** BUT HE'D HOPED NOT AS SOON AS **THIS**. BY TWO O'CLOCK HE COULD WAIT NO LONGER. PEGGY HADN'T COMPLAINED BUT HE'D CAUGHT HER **LICKING** HER PALE, DRY LIPS... **SAW** HER **SHALLOWING** WITH PAIN. HE DREW UP THE **GINGER ALE...**!

ONE SMALL **SHALLOW**. IT WAS **MADDENING** NOT TO GULP IT GREEDILY. HIS HEART WENT **OUT** TO HER BUT HE **RECAPPED** THE BOTTLE. HE **SCANNED** THE HORIZON FOR THE **HUNDREDTH** TIME FOR SOME SIGN OF A SHIP. FOR THE **HUNDREDTH** TIME HE **SAW** ONLY WATER. HIS ARMS **ACHED**.



THEY TOLD STORIES, JOKES, RIDDLES... **LAUGHED** ABOUT URINATING IN THEIR CLOTHES. HE **RESOAKED** THE SKIRT HALVES SEVERAL TIMES AND UNTIED HER OFTEN TO KEEP HER BLOOD **CIRCULATING**. THEY **WAITED**. THE SUN **DIPPED** TOWARD THE SEA. THEY **SIPPED** MORE **GINGER ALE**. THEY **WAITED**. HUNGER **JABBED** AT THEM MORE FREQUENTLY. THEY **WAITED**.

NIGHT HE HAD NEVER **SEEN** SO MANY STARS. (BLESSEDLY THE WATER REMAINED **WARM**. THEY TALKED LESS... IT MADE THEM **THIRSTY**. SHE HUMMED "**MOON RIVER**." THE RING **ROCKED**... **ROCKED**. HE **CAUGHT** HIMSELF **NODDING**. HE BIT HIS LIP TO **STAY** AWAKE. SHE **SMILED** **TIREDELY**.



THEY COUNTED SHOOTING STARS. THOUGHT ABOUT THE **VASTNESS** OF THE HEAVENS. IT WAS COMFORTING TO LOOK STRAIGHT UP AND SEE **NOTHING** BUT STARS... SOMETHING YOU COULD POON ON YOUR OWN BACK PORCH. THEY THOUGHT OF **HOME**. HER HEAD **BOBBED** REPEATEDLY. HE WATCHED, **SMILING**. AS SHE **GAVE** IN TO **SLEEP**.



HE HADN'T **PRAYED** SINCE HE WAS TEN. HE DID SO **NOW** WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT. THEN HE **WATCHED** HER A LONG WHILE. SHE LOOKED LIKE A **LOST** LITTLE GIRL. **I'M SORRY, PEGGY**. HE THOUGHT...KNOWING IT WASN'T HIS FAULT BUT **UNABLE** TO HELP THINKING IT. THE RING **ROCKED**...HE COULDN'T **REMEMBER** DOING OFF...?



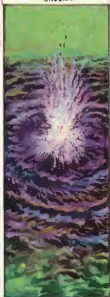


LATER HE REALIZED IT WAS A **STUPID** THING TO DO...HE COULD HAVE **EATEN** THE GULL CAREFULLY HE ARRANGED THE **PADDLE** IN FRONT OF HIM AND WAITED FOR ANOTHER BIRD. NONE CAME HE LICKED HIS LIPS. **I DON'T CARE ANYWAY... I'M GOING TO DIE...**

HE WAS HALF-ASLEEP IN LATE AFTERNOON WHEN THE RING **JERKED** VIOLENTLY ONCE HE LOOKED UP DAZZLED TRYING TO ORGANIZE HIS THOUGHTS HAD THEY HIT SOMETHING "A **ROCK?**" **SHORE?** HE GAZED ABOUT... THE OCEAN WAS FLAT.

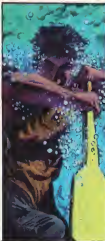


THEN THE RING PULLED HIM **UNDER...**



HE BOBBED BACK UP CHOKING WITH WATER **STILL** HOLDING THE RING WHAT WAS HAPPENING?

BELOW HIM A DARK **SHADOW** GLIDED BY **TERROR** GRIPPED HIM.



A SENSE OF **TREMORS** SEIZED HIS BODY. HE GRIPPED THE PADDLE **TIGHTLY**, JERKING HIS HEAD IN ALL DIRECTIONS. A HUNDRED FEET FROM HIM A GRAY **FIN** SURFACED HE HEARD HIMSELF **WHAMPER**.



HE PULLED THE **PADDLE** IN FRONT OF HIM AND HUNG ONTO THE RING WITH **ONE** HAND, WAITING FOR THE **SHADOW** TO RETURN WHEN IT DID HE RUT HIS **FACE** INTO THE WATER AND **JABBED** AT IT SAVAGELY THE **SHADOW** SHOT AWAY.

A **DOZEN** FEET FROM HIM THE **RIN** DISAPPEARED HE OPENED HIS EYES UNDER THE STINGING SALT WATER AND JABBED AT THE **SLEEK BLUR** WITH THE PADDLE. HE **MISSSED** THE RING PULLED HIM **UNDER**.



HE SURFACED, COUGHING AND SNEERING AND SPYTTING UP BILE. HE JERKED THE PADDLE ABOUT SEARCHING WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES.



THE SHADON LOOKED BENEATH HIM. HE WAITED THIS TIME... WAITED UNTIL THE RINK OPENING APPEARED. THEN HE JAMMED DOWN HARD. THE PADDLE STRUCK SOMETHING.



HE PULLED THE PADDLE UP. THE SMOOTH HOOD ENDED IN A JAGGED STUMP. HE WIPE AT HIS EYES AND STARED BENEATH THE SURFACE. THE SHARK WAS GONE... AS PEGGY'S LEFT LEG JUST BELOW THE KNEE HE SCREAMED HIS FRUSTRATION WAITING FOR THE SHARK TO RETURN. IT DIDN'T.



SUNSET SET THE ENTIRE SKY AFIRE. SOMEWHERE HIS BRAIN REGISTERED ITS BEAUTY BUT HE DON'T FEEL IT. THE RING ROCKED CEASELESSLY. I HAVEN'T EATEN IN TWO DAYS, HE THOUGHT... I'M DYING. IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE NOW THAT HE'D EVER EATEN. HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND SAW PEGGY ON THE BOW OF THEIR YACHT...



HE HUGGED THE ROCKING RING IN HIS ARMS AND THE RING BECAME PEGGY ROCKING HIM AGAINST HER BREAST, RUNNING HER NAILS THROUGH HIS HAIR, ASKING HIM WHAT HE'D LIKE FOR DINNER...

"I WANT YOU FOR DINNER," HE SAID AND SHE NAGGED A FINGER AT HIM IN MOCK REPROACHMENT AND HE TOOK THE FINGER AND KISSED IT AND HER PALM AND HER CHEEK AND HER LIPS... SOFT AND WARM AND SWEET. HE SAID, "LET'S SKIP DINNER..."

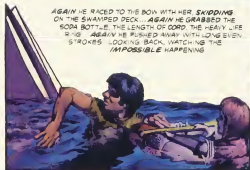


THEY HELD EACH OTHER IN THE DARK CABIN AND SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH HER LITTLE GIRL'S EYES AND PLACED HIS HAND AGAINST HER BREAST AND SAID, "FEEL MY HEART?... IT'S BEATING JUST FOR YOU... WHATEVER HAPPENS, DON'T LET ANYBODY OR ANYTHING TAKE IT FROM YOU..."

HE FELT THE SHIP
SHUDDER ABRUPTLY
BENEATH THEM... SAW
THE SUDDEN LOOK OF
FEAR IN PEGGY'S EYES.
HE KNEW AGAIN THE
HAGONY OF RUNNING
BELOW DECK, THE
SHOCK OF FEELING
SALT WATER LAP ABOUT
HIS ANKLES...



AGAIN HE RACED TO THE BOW WITH HER, SKIPPING
ON THE SWAMPED DECK... AGAIN HE GRABBED THE
SODA BOTTLE, THE LENGTH OF CORD, THE HEAVY LIFE
RING. AGAIN HE RUSHED AWAY WITH LONG EVEN
STROKES, LOOKING BACK, WATCHING THE
IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENING.



A MIND-PIERCING SCREECH BROKE HIS REVERIE.
HE JOLTED UP, EYES FIXING CONFUSELY ON HIS
WIFE'S CORPSE... AS IF SHE MIGHT SUPPLY ANSWERS.
HIS STOMACH TWISTED, HER FACE WAS HALF GONE.
THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH GULLS...

HE GRABBED UP THE PADDLE, LOOKING DOWNY
AS HE DID SO, HIS SKIN GREW TIGHT, THE SEA
WAS ALIVE WITH SHARKS...



AN ENORMOUS BLUE SHAPE BRUSHED
PAST HIS LEG, THE RING JERKED,
JARRING HIS TEETH. HE STRUCK
OUT WITH THE BROKEN PADDLE. THE
WATER THRASHED, FOAMED. AN-
OTHER SHAPE RUSHED UP BENEATH
HIM, THE RING SHUDDERED, TORE
FROM HIS GRASP...



HE LURCHED THROUGH THE WATER,
GASPING... CAUGHT THE RING JUST
AS IT JERKED AGAIN VIOLENTLY.
HE CRIED OUT... HIS VOICE LIKE A
DRY RATTLE. HIS WIFE'S BODY
BOBBED AND JUMPED, ARMS
FLOPPING IN MUTE PROTEST. THEY
WERE BUTCHERING HER...

HE STRUCK DOWNWARD WITH THE PADDLE AGAIN AND AGAIN SCREAMING AT THEM. THE SEA TURNED TO WHITE AGAIN AROUND HIM. THEN RED. THE PADDLE WAS WRENCHED FROM HIS HANDS. HE FOUND IT FLOATING NEARBY...RETRIEVED IT...JABBED AGAIN...



THE MOMENT HE PAUSED TO CATCH HIS BREATH, THE GULLS RETURNED. HE TRIED TO YELL, BUT HIS VOICE WOULDN'T WORK ANYMORE. HE WAIVED HIS ARMS WEAKLY, BUT THEY ONLY RUFFLED THEIR FEATHERS AND CONTINUED THEIR GREEDY PLUCKING...



THE SHARKS MOVED OFF MOMENTARILY. HE HUNG IN THE WATER EXHAUSTED, CHEST HEAVING. THEN HE SCREAMED AGAIN. HIS WIFE WAS COVERED WITH GULLS. HE LIFTED THE PADDLE WITH LEADEN ARMS AND SWUNG WILDLY AT THEM...

THE RING JERKED AND THEY FLEW OFF SCREAMING. THE DARK SHAPES WERE BACK. HE JABBED OUT WEARILY WITH THE PADDLE. HE SAW THE CORD LOOSEN AROUND HIS WIFE'S WAIST...SAW HER BEGIN SLIPPING DOWNWARD INTO THE WATER. HE MOANED...GRABBED FOR HER...



HE HELD HER CLOSE AS THE GULLS SETTLED OVER THEM. AND THE DARK SHAPES JERKED CONVULSIVELY AT THEM IN THE THRASHING, SPRAY-FLECKED SEA. HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND PEGGY RAN HER FINGERS THROUGH HIS HAIR AND GROINED "MOON RIVER" TO HIM AND HE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT HE WANTED FOR DINNER...



THREE HOURS LATER HE WAS CLINGING ONLY TO THE LIFE RING WHEN THE SILVER SHARK APPEARED ON THE HORIZON, SWOOPING TOWARD HIM.





DON'T MISS AN ISSUE OF..



CREEPY

EERIE

VAMPIRELLA



WARREN'S TRIPLE-THREAT TRIO!